THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The Central Government has received on 21.06.2006 the proposal for diversion of 11.530 hectares of forest land in district Narsinghpur for the construction of Rani Avantibai Sagar Canal under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. The approval order for the project was issued on 07.122007.

Tackling global warming

431. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the Government's policy to tackle issue of global warming;

(b) whether Government is implementing any specific measures to minimise the destruction of the country; and

(c) the number of forestation programmes that have been launched in the last four years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the Kyoto Protocol are the two multilateral environmental agreements addressing the issues related to climate change. India is a Party to both these agreements. As per the Kyoto Protocol, only developed countries have quantified commitment for reducing emissions of Greenhouse Gases. Developing countries including India have no such obligation of reducing emissions of greenhouse gases.

Nevertheless, the Government of India is conscious of various concerns that arise due to climate change. The existing legislative and policy framework and wide ranging reforms in relevant sectors contribute to addressing climate change. The activities that are aimed at promoting accelerated economic growth on the one hand and addressing climate change concerns on the other include programmes related to promotion of energy efficiency, energy conservation, power sector reforms, active renewable energy programme, fuel switching to cleaner energy, afforestation and conservation of forests, etc.

Further, Government of India has launched the National Action Plan on Climate Change in June 2008 to outline its strategy to meet the challenge of Climate Change. The National Action Plan advocates a strategy that promotes, firstly, the adaptation to Climate Change and secondly, further enhancement of the ecological sustainability of India's development path. Eight National Missions which form the core of the National Action Plan represent multi-pronged, long term and integrate strategies for achieving key goals in the context of climate change. The focus is on promoting understanding of Climate Change, adaptation and mitigation, energy efficiency and natural resource conservation.

(c) India has a strong and rapidly growing afforestation programme. Currently, two major schemes are being implemented namely, National Afforestation Programme Scheme for regeneration of degraded forests and adjoining areas in the country and Grants-in-aid to Greening India. The Grants-in-aid to Greening India was restructured in 2005.

Effect of global warming on glaciers

432. DR. K. MALAISAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that based on the observation of U.N. Inter-Governmental panel on climate change that the glaciers in Himalayas are receding faster than any other parts of the world leading to earth warming;

(b) if so, whether this situation would influence the perennial rivers becoming seasonal rivers;

(c) the serious repercussions and implications of such a situation; and

(d) whether it is not important and urgent to establish an automated weather situation monitor and glacier melting?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Government of India is aware of the Report of U.N. Inter-Governmental panel on climate change and its related concerns.

(b) and (c) The findings reported in the IPCC Report are based on modeling studies. However, more comprehensive studies would be required to substantiate these findings. According to Geological Survey of India, retreat and advance of glacier is a natural process. Majority of the Glaciers of Himalayan region are passing through a phase of recession as has been the case with glaciers located in other of the World. Global warming could be the cause of the recession of glaciers rather than the effect of such recession and is directly related to the amount of snow it receives in the catchments during winter which is varying.

(d) A number of automatic weather stations have already been established by various Government agencies. The glacier dynamics are being studied continuously through project mode under the Himalayan Glaciology Programme of Department of Science and Technology for the last two decades.

Plan for pollution free Yamuna

†433. SHRI MOTILAL VORA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the date of starting work on the plan to make the Yamuna pollution free;

(b) the pollution level of the Yamuna at the time of starting of the plan;

(c) the total amount spent so far to make the Yamuna pollution free; and

(d) the pollution level of Yamuna as on December 31, 2008?

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.